

Docket No. 0547-1006

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-22 (cancelled)

23. (new) A method creating a link between at least one user (1) and a publisher (2) of digital entities (in particular software, files, compact disks, video disks, etc. ...) that are reproducible by computer and/or electronic means; said digital entities being initially designed for use or execution solely on a single piece of user computer equipment;

said method comprising the following steps:

- a step (3) of subdividing said digital entity into two portions, a first portion and a second portion, neither of which portions can be run without the other;
- a step of storing said first portion in a memory zone (4a) of a server (4) connected to a computer network (5a, 5b);
- a step of transmitting said second portion to at least one user (1) having computer equipment (6) including computer means for implementing said second portion;
- a step of installing (6a) said second portion on said computer equipment (6);
- a step (7) of connecting said computer equipment to said computer network (5b); and
- a step of establishing (4d, 6b) a functional link between said first portion and said second portion;

whereby, when said second portion is put into operation, it automatically makes a connection via the computer network to said server in order to execute the said missing first portion as stored in said server.

24. (new) A method according to claim 23, such that it further comprises:

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- a step of exchanging information relating to said digital entity by means of said functional links;
whereby a community of users exchanging information is established.

25. (new) A method according claim 23, such that it further comprises:

- a step of controlling (4e) access to said server;
whereby a user can access said first portion and use said digital entity only if the user possesses access rights.

26. (new) A method according to claim 25, such that it further comprises:

- a step of controlling and limiting access to said server to a limited period of time and/or to a limited number of uses and/or to an approved population of users;
whereby the user can make use of such digital entity in full only during an evaluation stage and/or any stage agreed to with the publisher.

27. (new) A method according to claim 23, such that it further comprises:

- a step of identifying (4f) the user on making a connection to said server; and
- a step of storing (4g) identifiers specific to said user;

whereby the publisher of said digital entity can reference clients, in particular potential clients of said digital entity.

28. (new) A method according to claim 23, such that it further comprises:

- a step of analyzing (3a) events linked with using said digital entity, in particular the succession of events during installation, the frequency with which a function of said digital entity is used, the frequency with which said digital entity is used during an evaluation stage;

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whereby the publisher has available a panel of users who can co-operate in testing the digital entity; and

whereby the publisher of said digital entity can determine the degree of client satisfaction, in particular of potential clients.

29. (new) A method according to claim 23, such that it further comprises:

- a step of downloading (4h) the first portion of said digital entity into the computer equipment of the user;

whereby a user who has decided to acquire said digital entity can immediately have it available locally.

30. (new) A system creating a link between at least one user (1) and a publisher (2) of digital entities (in particular software, files, compact disks, video disks, etc. ...) that are reproducible by computer and/or electronic means; said digital entities being initially designed for use or execution solely on a single piece of user computer equipment;

said system comprising the following steps:

- partitioning computer means (3) for subdividing said digital entity into two portions, a first portion and a second portion, neither of which can be used without the other;

- a server (4) connected to a computer network (5a, 5b), said server (4) having a memory zone (4a) in which said first portion is stored;

- transmission means (5a, 5b) for transmitting said second portion to at least one user (1) having computer equipment (6) including computer means for implementing said second portion;

- installation means (6a) for installing said second portion on said computer equipment (6);

- connection means (7) for connecting said computer equipment to said computer network (5b); and

- computer means (4d, 6b) for establishing a functional link between said first portion and said portion;

whereby, when said second portion is put into operation, it automatically makes a connection via the computer network

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with said server to execute said missing first portion stored in said server.

31. (new) A system according to claim 30, such that:

- the computer means (4d, 6b) for establishing a functional link between said first portion and said second portion comprise communications means for exchanging information concerning said digital entity;
whereby a community of users interchanging information is established.

32. (new) A system according to claim 29, such that it further comprises:

- control means (4e) for controlling access to said server;
whereby a user can access said first portion and use said digital entity only if the user possesses access rights.

33. (new) A system according to claim 32, such that the control means (4e) further comprise limitation means for limiting access to said server to a limited period of time and/or to a limited number of uses and/or to an approved population of users;

whereby the user can use said digital entity in full only during an evaluation stage and/or any other stage agreed with the publisher.

34. (new) A system according to claim 30, such that it further comprises:

- identification means (4f) for identifying the user when connected to said server; and
- storage means (4g) for storing identifiers specific to said user;

whereby the publisher of said digital entity can reference clients, in particular potential clients of said digital entity.

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35. (new) A system according to claim 34, such that said server includes said identification means (4f) and said storage means (4g).

36. (new) A system according to claim 30, such that it further comprises:

- computer analysis means (3a) for analyzing events linked with using said digital entity, in particular the succession of events during installation, the frequency with which a function of said digital entity is used, the frequency with which said digital entity is used during an evaluation stage;

whereby the publisher has available a panel of users who can co-operate in testing the digital entity; and

whereby the publisher of said digital entity can determine the degree of client satisfaction, in particular with potential clients.

37. (new) A system according to claim 30, such that it further comprises:

- downloading means (4h) in particular situated in said server, for downloading the first portion of said digital entity into the computer equipment of a user;

whereby a user who has decided to acquire digital entity can immediately have it available locally.

38. (new) A server creating a link between at least one user (1) and a publisher (2) of digital entities (in particular software, files, compact disks, video disks, etc. ...) that are reproducible by computer and/or electronic means; said digital entities being initially designed for use or execution solely on a single piece of user computer equipment (6);

said server (4) being connected to a computer network (5a, 4b);

said server comprising the following steps:

- computer means for using a first portion of the digital entity in co-operation with a second portion used on the user's computer equipment (6);

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- a memory zone (4a) in which said first portion is stored; and
- computer means (4d) for establishing a functional link between said first portion and said second portion;
whereby, on said second portion being put into operation, it automatically makes a connection via the computer network with said server to execute said missing first portion stored in said server.

39. (new) A server according to claim 38, such that:

- the computer means (4d) for establishing a functional link between said first portion and said second portion comprise communications means for exchanging information relating to said digital entity;
whereby a community of users exchanging information is established.

40. (new) A server according to claim 38, such that it further comprises:

- control means (4e) for controlling access to said server;
whereby a user can access said first portion and use said digital entity only if the user possesses access rights.

41. (new) A server according to claim 40, such that the control means (4e) further comprise limitation means for limiting access to said server to a limited period of time and/or to a limited number of uses and/or to an approved population of users;

- whereby a user can use said digital entity in full only during an evaluation stage and/or during any stage agreed with the publisher.

42. (new) A server according to claim 38, such that it further comprises:

- identification means (4f) for identifying the user on connecting to said server; and

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- storage means (4g) for storing identifiers specific to said user;

whereby the publisher of said digital entity can reference clients, in particular potential clients of said digital entity.

43. (new) A server according to claim 38, such that it further comprises:

- computer analysis means (3a) for analyzing events associated with using said digital entity, in particular the succession of events during installation, the frequency with which a function of said digital entity is used, the frequency with which said digital entity is used during an evaluation stage;

whereby the publisher has available a panel of users who can co-operate in testing the digital entity; and

whereby the publisher of said digital entity can determine the degree of client satisfaction, in particular of potential clients.

44. (new) A server according to claim 38, such that it further comprises:

- downloading means (4h) for downloading the first portion of said digital entity into the computer equipment of the user;

whereby a user who has decided to acquire said digital entity can immediately have it available locally.